



Sustainable Purchasing Policy

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*Prior to approval by Cabinet, the Sustainable Purchasing Policy was reviewed by Computing and Technology Services, Chartwells, and DTZ

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Policy Definitions

Appliances: Electronic devices that include but are not limited to printers, copiers, fax machines, laboratory equipment, lighting, refrigerators, and HVAC systems.

ASSHE's STARS: The Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System™(STARS) is a transparent, self-reporting framework for colleges and universities to measure their sustainability performance. The organization overseeing STARS is AASHE (Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education).

Bottled Water: Regular, flat, unflavored water sold in a package such as a bottle or box.

Certified Organic: Land and food and beverage products may be certified Organic under any [IFOAM-endorsed standard](#), e.g.:

- [Canada Organic Biologique](#) and/or certified by a [Canadian Food Inspection Agency \(CFIA\) accredited certification body](#)
- [European Union \(EU\) organic logo](#)
- [USDA Certified Organic](#) and/or certified Organic by a [USDA Accredited Certifying Agent \(ACA\)](#)

Cleaning products: All chemicals used by DTZ/UGL grounds and housekeeping services.

College: Will refer to Green Mountain College.

Community-based: Consistent with the [Business Alliance for Local Living Economies \(BALLE\)](#), enterprises may be considered community-based if they are cooperatively or independently-owned and the majority owner(s) are community members with full autonomy and local decision-making authority with respect to business practices. Community-based enterprises may include small and medium-sized businesses; family farms, ranches and fisheries; artisan shops; agricultural cooperatives; worker and consumer cooperatives; employee-owned companies (e.g. "ESOPs") and other enterprises that meet the above criteria.

To identify community-based enterprises, BALLE suggests that it may be helpful to ask the following questions:

- Is the business privately held (not publicly traded)?
- Do the business owners, totaling greater than 50 percent of the business ownership, live in your local region?
- Is the business registered in your state [or province], with no corporate or national headquarters outside your region?
- Can the business make independent decisions regarding the name and look of the business, as well as all business purchasing, practices, and distribution?

- Does the business pay all its own rent, marketing expenses, and other expenses (without assistance from a corporate headquarters)?

CTS: Computing and Technology Services department at Green Mountain College.

Disadvantaged Business: A community-based business that is:

- At least 51 percent owned, managed, and controlled by members of socially and/or economically disadvantaged groups. Examples include minority-owned and female-owned businesses.

And/or

- Located in an economically distressed area and for which local residents comprise 30 percent or more of all employees.

EPA: Environmental Protection Agency

FSC certified: Paper products meeting standards set by Forest Stewardship Council: “FSC certification ensures that products come from well managed forests that provide environmental, social and economic benefits.”

GOOS paper: “Good on one side.” One side of the paper is still usable, while the other has been previously printed on.

Local: Based on the STARS definition for local food and local businesses, at a minimum local is defined as originating within 250 miles (400 kilometers) of the institution (regardless of road mileage or terrain). Some parts of this policy dictate a higher local standard than this definition. In those cases, the higher local standard is defined in the text. Otherwise, the standard is 250.

RFP: A request for proposal (RFP) is a solicitation made, often through a bidding process, by an agency or company interested in procurement of a commodity, service or valuable asset, to potential suppliers to submit business proposals.

Social enterprises: Businesses whose prime investment is in human or environmental well-being, who operate ethically and are democratically owned and governed. Social enterprises may include, but are not limited to, organizations that are nominally part of the social and solidarity economy, e.g. fair and ethical trade organizations, self-help organizations, and cooperatives.

VOC: Volatile Organic Compounds (commonly found in materials such as paints and glues).

Introduction

In the purchasing of supplies and services, all departments of the institution will place high priority on reducing environmental impact, while also supporting the local economy, supporting businesses that are socially responsible, and supporting businesses that are disadvantaged. The policy covers the following main categories belonging to or relating to a particular sector of purchasing where it is important to have products purchased locally and/or from businesses consisting of groups that are disadvantaged and/or considered a minority. This proposed purchasing policy includes the necessary requirements to meet AASHE's STARS sustainability standards for all relevant categories.

Appliances:

The College will endeavor to always purchase energy efficient appliances and CTS equipment that meets one or all of the specific standards of sustainability that are outlined below:

1. Appliances should meet EPA Energy Star requirements for eligible products.
2. Appliances should meet the gold standard for IEEE 1680 sustainability standards laid out by UL (also known as EPEAT) for eligible products such as desktops, laptops/notebooks, work stations, displays (computer monitors), televisions, printers, copiers, scanners, and multifunction devices (fax machines, copiers, fax/copier combinations).¹

In the case of CTS equipment in particular, the complexities of the technology marketplace and manufacturing environment have led to many unsustainable practices both environmentally and socially. GMC will continue to identify and work with technology companies whose current & future policies are in line with the sustainability mission of the College.

To further reduce impact and the need to purchase new equipment, CTS endeavors to maximize the lifespan of its equipment. This may be accomplished in two ways. First, CTS strives to purchase equipment with an expected lifespan of over five years, and aims to keep that equipment in service for at least that length of time. Second, for computers at the end of their useful life, usable parts will be taken out, refurbished, repaired, and reused if possible, while unusable parts will be processed as e-waste. This e-waste will go to a certified e-waste collector in New England, so that the material can be recycled.

Biomass:

Green Mountain College will endeavor to purchase a minimum of two thirds of the wood-chips used for the central heating plant from the Poultney Woodshed Project. The wood chips purchased from this program are sourced within a 50 mile radius of the college. Chips in this program meet a minimum threshold of sustainability by originating from land enrolled in the

¹ Note that most copiers, scanners and shared printers are leased rather than purchased. Smaller units are mostly provided by faculty and staff and as such are not under the purview of CTS. The EPEAT standard will be pursued by CTS for purchases under its domain. For other purchases, EPEAT will be strongly encouraged.

State of Vermont's Use Value Appraisal Program. More information about the Poultney Woodshed project can be found on Green Mountain College's sustainability website.

For the remaining wood chips, preference will go to companies that source sustainably within a 250 mile radius. In situations where other biomass feedstocks are used, all biomass should be sourced in accordance with Green Mountain College's sustainable mission.

Cleaning Products:

Facilities and maintenance providers should adhere to the industry-leading GreenClean[®] program. Adhering to GreenClean[®] mandates the purchase of GreenSeal and Environmental Choice products and materials, green cleaning equipment, and regular staff training for use of these products. Equipment and methods are selected specifically to protect and enhance air quality, occupant health, and building function. DTZ also continuously documents the efficiency of its equipment and performs cost-benefit analyses on replacing versus recycling old materials. Custodial hygiene training policy (followed by GreenClean[®]) for employees must be stringent and include consideration for both human and biological health. For a detailed copy of the GreenClean standards, please contact the Director of Sustainability or the Director of Facilities.

Food:

The College will strive to ensure by 2020, that all poultry and pork served in the dining hall will be humanely-sourced from humane-certified vendors. Beef will also be purchased from humane-certified vendors whenever financially feasible and available.

Additionally, GMC will move to convert 40% of food purchasing to local and community based and/or sustainably certified vendors (Currently, GMC purchases 36.89% from vendors that meet these criteria). Specifically, food purchases will meet at least one of the following criteria defined by STARS:

- [Local](#) and [community-based](#)

And/or

- Third party verified to be ecologically sound, fair and/or humane

Food and beverage purchases that meet both criteria listed above (e.g. [local](#) community-based products that are [Certified Organic](#)) should not be double-counted.

[Local](#) community- based products:

- Are sourced from [local](#) community-based [producers](#) (directly or through distributors)
- Contain raw ingredients (excluding water) that are third party verified and/or locally harvested and produced (e.g. bread made with Organic flour or [local](#) honey) and
- Exclude products from [Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations](#) (CAFOs), products that have [minimal nutritional value](#) (e.g. soda, chewing gum, candies made predominantly

from sweeteners), and products from [producers](#) that have been convicted of one or more labor law violations within the previous three years

Products that are not [local](#) and [community-based](#) must be third party verified to count. Recognized third party standards and certifications for food and beverages are outlined in the [STARS Technical Manual](#).

Furnishings and Renovations:

Supplies for furnishings and renovations include furniture, carpeting, paints, adhesives, flooring, and general construction material. GMC will endeavor to purchase supplies for furnishings and renovations from vendors whose products meet one or more of these criteria:

1. Local (within 250 miles)
2. Durable (expected to last over 20 years in conditions of heavy use)
3. FSC-certified (for wood products)
4. Low VOC
5. Reused or contains recycled content

When purchasing paint specifically, at a minimum the product should emit the lowest amount of VOCs possible in addition to the general criteria outlined above. In order to increase quality of paint used without adding to allotted budget, building interiors will be repainted when needed but no more than biannually.

When purchasing carpeting specifically, at a minimum the new carpets should meet one or more of the following criteria in addition to the general criteria outlined above:

1. Low VOC
2. Reused or contains recycled content

Carpets should be recycled when deemed unusable if a carpet recycler can be identified locally.

Paper:

Departments will endeavor to purchase a minimum of 30% post-consumer recycled content office paper. Paper should also be FSC-certified. Departments are encouraged to use digital communication whenever possible to reduce paper consumption on campus with the goal of reducing total cost of paper by 20% by 2020. All printers should be programmed to print double-sided. GOOS paper collection boxes should be available at all major printers, so that people can reuse paper.

Waste:

Waste diversion will endeavor to support GMC's Sustainability 2020 goals with the target of reducing the amount of compostable and recyclable material found in the landfill stream to less than 1%, and to simultaneously maximize the waste diversion stream to over 50% of total waste. Diversion will also comply with Vermont's Act 148, to reduce waste entering landfills by diverting recyclable and compostable material according to the timeline outlined in the law.

Outside vendors hired for on-campus work will be required to maximize waste diversion by recycling, composting and repurposing materials used. Outside vendors will also be required

to submit weights of waste generated and/or diverted to the Sustainability Office promptly after completing a project.

Water

Neither the College nor any vendors may sell bottled water on the Poultney campus. The ban applies to soda machines as well. Bottled water is defined as regular, flat, flavorless water that comes in a package such as a plastic bottle or box. Exceptions are allowed during emergencies when access to tap water is limited.

Grounds and Landscaping:

Groundskeeping must continue to be as local and sustainable as possible by sourcing materials from self-sustaining closed loops on campus. Waste materials such as mulch, dirt, compost, sod, and leaves should be redistributed and used around campus. Materials that are sourced off-campus should be purchased locally. Before being disposed of, all useable materials should be reused on campus.

Groundskeeping will aspire to purchase native non-invasive species as much as possible for decorative gardening. Stone, seeds, plants, and all other necessary materials that the College purchases for landscaping should also be sourced locally whenever possible.

Implementation and Review:

As part of Green Mountain College's goal to support local/disadvantaged businesses and social enterprises, the College will mail, when appropriate to vendor, the RFP's to the College's sustainable supply network of local and disadvantaged businesses making sure that they are aware of the opportunity to conduct business with the College. The College will also work to support local and/or disadvantaged businesses and social enterprises by devising a way to break down large single purchases into smaller orders from various businesses when such businesses may not be able to provide the full quantity required. The order may be filled by two businesses in order for the local/disadvantaged businesses to have a manageable size, or the order may be filled through two or more separate deliveries by the same business.

The Sustainability office will work with the Finance Office (Accounts Payable) to ensure that the following areas adhere to their respective sections of the Sustainable Purchasing Policy:

- Appliances: DTZ (Director of Facilities), CTS (Director), & the Business Office (Chief Financial Officer and Accounts Payable)
- Biomass: DTZ (Director of Facilities) and the Business Office (Chief Financial Officer and Accounts Payable)
- Cleaning Products: DTZ (Building Services Supervisor) and the Business Office (Chief Financial Officer and Accounts Payable)

- Food: Chartwells (Co-Directors) & Cerridwen Farm (Director of the Farm & Food Project) & Slow Foods/Center of the Plate Club (President) and the Business Office (Chief Financial Officer and Accounts Payable)
- Furnishings and Renovations: DTZ (Director of Facilities), Library (Director) & Business Office (Chief Financial officer and Accounts Payable)
- Paper: Library (Administrative Assistant), Academic Departments (Executive Assistant to the Provost), & Communications (Director) & Business Office (Chief Financial officer and Accounts Payable)
- Waste: Sustainability Office (Director of Sustainability) & DTZ (Director of Facilities & Building Services Supervisor) & Business Office (Chief Financial officer and Accounts Payable)
- Water: DTZ (Auxiliary Services Coordinator), Chartwells (Co-Directors) & Sustainability Office (Director of Sustainability)
- Grounds and Landscaping: Natural Crews (Chair of Land Use Committee) & DTZ (Director of Facilities)